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27 July 2010

The Honorable Frank R. Lautenberg
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3003

Dear Senator Lautenberg:

The Reserve Officers Association supports your introduction of a bill that would provide mental health care support to serving and veteran members of the National Guard and Reserve. The Reserve Officers Association with a membership of 63,000, advocate for all the 1.1 million Reserve Component members, both officer and enlisted.

It is very important to ensure that efforts of National Guard and Reserve members be recognized as contributing to national security missions in the Afghanistan and Iraq theaters and should be covered by mental health assessments passed last year for members of the Armed Forces. The Reserve Component is part of the Total Force team.

Often being remotely located, the mental state of Guard and Reserve members need to be screened periodically, especially those who did not deploy with a unit. Individual Augmentees and mobilized members of the Individual Ready Reserve, in particular, need to be contacted as they don't have an immediate command structure to provide support.

People who serve in the military and veterans face different mental health issues than civilians because of the intensity of the hazardous settings that they face. Post traumatic stress is accumulative, and symptoms of Traumatic Brain Injuries often show up belatedly. This nation can ill-afford to leave these heroes to face potential anxieties by themselves.

The Reserve Officers Association have advocated for the best mental health care for both Active and Reserve warriors. By educating about the challenges and solutions and seeking needed legislation, such as suggested by the Lautenberg bill, we will honor those who serve. Thank you for your efforts on this key issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David R. Bockel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

David R. Bockel
Major General, USA (Retired)
Executive Director

RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

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"Serving Those Who Serve"